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JS session adjourned till Feb 16

The third session of the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) which opened on January 15, was adjourned yesterday for 16 days till February 16, reports BSS.

During the current session, the Jatiya Sangsad passed four bills and witnessed the placing of the historic 30-year treaty on the sharing of the Ganges water with India.

The bills passed by the Sangsad were: Arthur Rin Adat (Amendment) Bill and three local government parishad bills of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban. The tenure of the local bodies of the three hill districts was extended by another 180 days.

The lawmakers belonging to both Treasury and Opposition benches took part in the general discussions on President's address delivered before the House on its opening day on January 15. The discussions, however, remained inconclusive.

A Bill aimed at enacting certain laws on the powers of a member of the Jatiya Sangsad in his constituency was introduced yesterday by BNP member Giasuddin Quader Chowdhury.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury who was in the chair sent the bill to the committee dealing with private members' affairs. The committee will submit its reports on the bill in the House within one

month, as per rules.

By Staff Correspondent

The bill proposes that an MP will be on the top in the order of precedence in his constituency. He will remain an adviser on the managing committee of all educational institutions. All development works in educational institutions will be done through him.

Another provision says no development project will be taken up without the approval of the MP in his constituency. Prior endorsement by the MP concerned will be needed for development projects funded by international agencies, the bill proposes.

The local MP will approve the committee dealing with

test-relief and Food for Works Programme in his constituency. He will preside over all meetings, excepting administrative ones, at government offices and institutions under his jurisdiction.

The government will have to consult the local MP in selecting site for any industry, public health or public-welfare institutions. Consent of the MP concerned will be needed for development projects funded by international agencies, the bill proposes.

Soon after Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury sent the bill to the committee dealing with private members' affairs, the committee will submit its reports on the bill in the House within one

Bill seeking maximum power for MPs in constituencies

JS snippets

By Nazmul Ashraf

BNP lawmaker Nazimuddin Alam mentioned the popular offer, 'Daal-free' (lentil at free of cost), made at a section of restaurants at different ferry ghats, while speaking about the high-price of lentil in the House yesterday.

Introducing Alam, Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid who was in the Chair, asked, "Do you finish your meal at those restaurants (taking the Daal only)?"

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Govt politicising civil admin, army: Khaleda

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday warned that her party would not remain silent when the country is being handed over to others jeopardising its independence, sovereignty and religious values, reports UNB.

"Bangladesh cannot become a protectorate of any country," she said, adding BNP will resist all evil forces with the help of the patriotic people who are the main strength of the party.

"We have to strengthen the relationship with the people to achieve the goal," she said at a function in the afternoon at 29 Minto Road, official residence of the Leader of the Opposition.

A former independent MP from Sirajganj-4, Shamsul Alam, a UP chairman of the district's Ullapara thana, Abdus Samad, and some workers of Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) formally joined BNP at the function.

Begum Zia called upon people from all walks of life including farmers, labourers and professionals, to unite under the banner of BNP with a renewed vow to foil all conspira-

cies against the country and its people.

She accused the present government of politicising the civil administration as well as the patriotic armed forces.

"They are not only politicising, but also resorting to nepotism in all spheres of administration," she said.

The opposition leader reiterated that on the eve of holy Eid, the country was awash with Indian clothes when the local textile mills are on the verge of closure.

Begum Zia said there is no sign of development in the last seven months after Awami League has assumed power. Some development works were closed while the ruling party men were engaged in tug of war for capturing tenders, she alleged.

The function was also addressed by Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Y M Kamal, Habibur Rahman Habib, Humayun Khan, Shamsul Alam and Abdus Samad. Party MP Alamgir Kabir and Information and Research Secretary Ehsanul Kabir were present.

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Card phone system to be privatised

By Staff Correspondent

Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday said the government would privatise the card phone system in the country very soon.

"We are going for more and more privatisation of the telecommunications system because we believe a competition between the public and the private sector is the key to improving customer services," the minister said while inaugurating an

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Food procurement drive extended by 2 months

By Staff Correspondent

Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that the government's food-grain procurement drive has been extended for two more months to give continued price support to the growers.

The procurement drive that began on December 1 last year, was suspended on January 1. The minister said while inaugurating an

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EU to ease GSP rules of origin : Tofael

The European Union (EU) has agreed for derogation of a law relating to the GSP for Bangladesh's knit apparels, ending the apprehension about continuation of the duty-exemption facility.

They (the officials of the EU) have agreed to derogate from the rules of origin clause of the GSP ... we are expecting announcement from them

within a couple of months," Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed said yesterday.

Talking to UNB at the airport on his return from Belgium, where he went to negotiate with the EU the future of the generalised system of preference (GSP), Tofael said the EU officials had realised Bangladesh's point for GSP continuation.

During the five-day trip to Brussels, the EU headquarters, the Bangladeshi minister met with EU Vice-presidents Sir Leon Brittan and Manuel Marin and discussed details of the GSP and readymade garment industry.

"We have informed them of our problem with the rules-of-origin criteria for getting the GSP facility," said Tofael, flanked by his entourage members including manufacturers of garment and knitwear.

In the meetings, the minister requested both the officials to derogate the rules-of-origin

clause of the GSP for three years for knit items and upto the year 2005 for sweater and pullovers.

"They have agreed in principle to our proposal," he said, adding that the GSP facility is going to be continued for the country's readymade garment industry.

Bangladesh exports knit items, sweater and pullovers worth 450 million US dollars to the European markets and enjoys a 12 per cent duty exemption in exporting the products under the GSP facility.

But for qualifying for GSP, the EU has imposed a condition related to rules of origin and asked the countries willing to avail the facility to achieve a three-stage transformation — from fibre to yarn, yarn to fabric and fabric to garment — for knit garments and two-stage transformation — from yarn to fabric and fabric to garment — for oven garments.

They highly appreciated the criteria for knit items

appeared to be a serious prob-

lem for Bangladeshi because it does not produce enough cotton while sufficient spinning mills are yet to be set up to meet the growing demand of the knitwear industry.

Recently, an inspection team of the EU detected huge consignments having fake certificates that those were of Bangladesh origin, although those were originally not. The certificates were issued by Bangladeshi authorities.

This angered the EU authorities and they threatened to stop the facility for the garment sector unless the authorities here take necessary measures to end such fraud.

The minister informed the EU officials that the government had already constituted a high-powered monitoring committee to ensure greater transparency in issuing GSP certificates for export to EU.

They highly appreciated the measures already taken by the

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Assault on officials alleged Tax Commission employees go on work-stoppages

Officials and employees of Tax Commission went on a wildcat work-stoppages yesterday protesting assault on one of their colleagues, reports UNB.

TCS (Tax) Association in an emergency meeting last night demanded immediate redress, failing which they will go for a greater movement.

As soon as the news spread, all officers and employees of Tax Commission in the city struck work in instant protest and demanding exemplary punishment.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Two separate cases were filed by the officials of the Taxation Department against Ashanullah Moni, the owner of Razmuni Cinema Hall and Isha Kha Complex in the city.

Officials of department alleged that the owner of Razmuni manhandled them and also issued a threat on their lives.

The Assistant Commissioner (Taxes), Ruful Amin in his FIR lodged with the Ramna Thana yesterday alleged that Moni along with at least 10 armed hoodlums entered his

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White Panel senators stage walkout Service tenure of DU teachers extended

A special session of the Dhaka University Senate yesterday witnessed a noisy walkout by White Panel senators as it adopted a proposal extending the service tenure of teachers, reports UNB.

The pro-BNP White Panel senators deserted the meeting after Asr prayers break as soon as the proposal for extension from 60 to 65 years was made by Senate Chairman VC A K Azad Chowdhury and endorsed by a majority amidst huge claps.

The Chairman later announced the proposal as passed in the absence of the White senators.

Prof Tajmeri Islam of White Panel, before the walkout, told the Senate amidst a hue and cry that they wanted an open discussion and secret ballot on the matter.

The Blue Panel senators at that time were shouting back that the proposal had already been passed.

Earlier, the special session marking the Silver Jubilee of Independence began at 3 pm with Vice-Chancellor Azad Chowdhury in the chair. It ended at 7:30 pm.

The Senate paid respect to the students, teachers and employees of the university who had died since January 25.

The Senate held discussion on overall campus situation, including possibility of holding election to DUCSU and Hall Unions and the assault on a fe-

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Leghari for strengthening ties with Dhaka

From Staff Correspondent

KARACHI, Jan 30: Further accelerating the existing bilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and Pakistan featured prominently during an hour long meeting yesterday between Pakistan President Farooq Ahmed Leghari and visiting Bangladeshi foreign secretary Farooq Sobhan.

Talking to this correspondent over telephone Farooq Sobhan, understood the context of the proposed sub-regional grouping among four South Asian countries.

Bangladesh assured of approaching Pakistan the developments regarding the sub-regional grouping, said Farooq Sobhan.

He said that President Leghari was apprised of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's participation in the upcoming special summit of the leaders of OIC countries scheduled to begin on March 23 in Islamabad.

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Law Secretary Amin Ullah yesterday handed over a copy of the report to the Commission for its opinion, said an official handout.

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10 BCL activists held with arms in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 30: Detective branch of police during a raid on two residential hotels in the city arrested 10 activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), with illegal arms and ammunition early today.

Police said the BCL activists were wanted in connection with various criminal cases, including murder, illegal toll collection and terrorism.

They were using the hotels as

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Akhtaruzzaman Babu surrenders to court

Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury

Babu, former Awami League MP and an accused in the Humayun Zahir murder case, was sent to Suhrawardy Hospital when he surrendered to the court yesterday, reports UNB.

A High Court Division bench rejected Babu's bail on January 15 and ordered him to surrender to the lower court by January 30. He was granted bail on July 15, 1996.

He filed two petitions with the court, one seeking for division in the jail and another for stay in the custody of court in VIP cabin No. 1 of the Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases at Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital Complex.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Shamsul Hasan allowed his two petitions as none objected at the time of hearing.

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BOC Bangladesh Limited Shareholders' Announcement

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING POSTPONED

Due to circumstances outside the control of the Company, the 24th Annual General Meeting scheduled for Sunday, 2 February 1997 at Senakunja, Dhaka Cantonment, has been postponed until further notice. Shareholders will be notified of the fresh date, venue, etc. in due course. The Board deeply regrets the inconvenience.

By order of the Board

Azizur Rashid
Company Secretary
30 January 1997

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'Signature culture'

By Staff Correspondent
Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday blasted the "Signature culture" of the bureaucracy and said, "the Prime Minister while signing a file recently wrote a note to the officials concerned that they should kindly leave some space for her to sign in the files."

Inaugurating an online Internet service in the city yesterday, he said, "I sometimes get tired of signing in the files. And all the files are full of so many signatures that I often don't find space to put my signature there."

He added that recently a file was sent to the Prime Minister for her signature. The file contained so many signatures that the Prime Minister could not decide where to put her signature.

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14 Jubo Command activists held

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested 14 persons on charges of 'terrorism' and 'anti-state activities' from a city restaurant yesterday evening.

They were attending an iftar party arranged by the Jubo Command.

Police said, the arrested persons are members of the Jubo Command, a youth organisation, which grew up as an anti-Ghatak Dalai Nirmul Committee in 1992.

They were being interrogated at the Detective Branch headquarters.